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AMB. HALL URGES MORE PRESSURE ON SUDAN TO END CRISIS IN DARFUR

U.S. envoy calls for tougher action by
international community

By Wendy Lubetkin

Washington File Special Correspondent

Geneva -- A top U.S. humanitarian official has urged the international community to come together to do "whatever it takes" to pressure the government of Sudan and the rebels to end the ongoing tragedy of rapes, killings and destruction in Darfur.

"The people have great fear," said Tony P. Hall, U.S. ambassador to the U.N. food and agriculture agencies, who had just returned from a trip to Darfur. "Because there is no security, they are not going home."

Hall, who was speaking November 30 at a U.S.-sponsored press conference in Geneva via digital video from Rome, is the U.S. envoy to the World Food Program (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

Neither the government nor the rebels in Sudan are honoring their commitments to allow access for humanitarian aid, Hall said. "You could see that recently, and even just in the last few days.

"Whatever pressure it takes, whether it be resolutions, more NGOs, more U.N. people, more eyes and ears, certainly more troops coming from the African Union [AU], sanctions, whatever it takes to stop the killing,

the violence, the rapes, the tragedy that is going on there, and to take away the fear of these people,” he said, “we should put all those things on the table and we should use whatever we have available to us to put pressure on this government and these warring parties.”

The pressure, Hall added, would need to “come from a lot of different sources.” He expressed frustration at the use of the “threat of veto” at the United Nations by countries that do business in Sudan.

The United Nations estimates that some 1.6 million people have been displaced by the continuing violence. Hall said that the insecurity and lack of access to North Darfur means that as many as 700,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) may now be beyond the reach of humanitarian aid.

“I have been to about 115 countries in the world, and I cannot remember the last time when we had 130 to 150 IDP camps in one country, as we do in North, South and West Darfur,” he said.

Hall said the approximately 800 AU soldiers in Darfur lack a real mandate to protect the displaced and are “trying to guard an area about the size of France,” an impossible task. The United States hopes that about 3,500 additional AU troops will be on the ground by early January 2005, and it wants them to begin to actively document cases of crimes against humanity. “They need to let these people know that we are not going to forget these crimes that are being committed,” he said.

Unless people can return to their villages and farmlands sometime during the next five months, they will not be able to plant for the next season, another harvest will be lost, and the international community will probably need to provide for them for another two years, Hall said.

Hall said the lone bright spot of his November 18-23 trip to Darfur and Libya was traveling to the Libyan desert to observe the passage of a 350-truck aid convoy laden with 6,500 metric tons of American aid destined for Sudanese refugees in Chad. “It was a very historic humanitarian event because for the first time we had American food going through Libya, with the help of Libya and the World Food Program,” he said.

While Hall discussed his trip with journalists via video linkup, Jean-Jacques Graise, senior deputy director of the World Food Program, and Linda Thomas-Greenfield, U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state for population,

refugees and migration, were present at the press conference. (Earlier the same day in Geneva, United Nations aid officials launched an urgent appeal for \$1.5 billion in aid for war-torn Sudan during the coming year.)

WFP’s Graise noted that the opening of the Libyan corridor was essential because during the rainy season it is the only land route to the refugee camps in Chad. Airlifts and airdrops would be up to 10 times as expensive, and would require a presence on the ground for distribution and organization that is not in place.

“The needs for 2005 are enormous until the refugees go back home and the IDPs return to their place of origin,” said Graise. The United Nations has estimated that some 2.5 million people will be in need of food assistance in Darfur during 2005.

Deputy Assistant Secretary Thomas-Greenfield said the United States is also concerned that if the violence continues in Darfur, more people will flee across the border into Chad. The logistics of supporting the 200,000 Sudanese refugees already there are extremely difficult, she said. “Finding adequate water to sustain life is not an easy thing in Chad and remains a problem that we are working on almost 24 hours a day,” she said.

“It is a two- to three-day drive from N’Djamena to Abeche and some of the food is coming in from Cameroon, so just getting things moved from point A to point B is very worrisome for all of us. The fact that this food came in through Libya was a very important success story for us in Chad,” Thomas-Greenfield said.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT A PRIORITY FOR U.S., USAID CHIEF SAYS

Natsios says administration sees development as key part of national security

By Kathryn McConnell
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The Bush administration has “retrieved development from the periphery” of U.S. foreign policy and has elevated it to a level equal with the other foreign policy pillars of defense and diplomacy, says Andrew Natsios, administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

As a result of this shift from the approach of the 1980s and 1990s, development is now seen as an essential component of national security and is mentioned on almost every page of the administration's national security strategy, Natsios said.

Speaking December 1 to the Society for International Development (SID), Natsios said this approach to development will eventually be seen in history as being as influential as the Marshall Plan in setting U.S. foreign policy, he said. General George Marshall, who in the late 1940s developed the reconstruction plan to help Europe recover from World War II, is considered the founder of U.S. foreign aid.

One result of the administration's new approach to development has been a budget increase for development programs to \$902 million in fiscal year 2004 from \$760 million in fiscal year 2003. The fiscal 2003 amount was three times as much as was allocated for aid in fiscal year 1999, he noted.

In addition, the development chief regularly attends meetings of the president's National Security Council, he said.

In recent years, the United States has shifted its development focus to helping governments build the institutions and capacity to support poverty reduction and economic growth, Natsios said. For example, the United States helps countries adopt reforms that protect private property, start a business, enter into contracts and obtain credit, he said.

Another example is helping countries assess how they can improve their airports and ports, and streamline and harmonize regulations so that goods can more quickly move between countries to customers' markets and allow countries to better take advantage of regional and international trade opportunities, he said.

USAID's capacity-building efforts extend to individuals, Natsios said. He pointed to a series of business training centers in Africa that are helping entrepreneurs learn new skills and acquire ideas about starting their own businesses.

Another part of the U.S. approach to foreign aid is on helping countries implement other microeconomic reforms, such as developing their human resources and investing in science and technology. Such reforms also

can help individuals participate in the larger macroeconomic environment, he said.

Microeconomic growth encourages foreign investment, Natsios said. Where it is not allowed to occur because of government controls and corruption, communities become "marginalized" and turn into places that nurture violence, human trafficking, drug trade and counterfeiting, the administrator said.

A third part of the approach is focusing on improving infrastructure, particularly roads, Natsios said. Roads help farmers and other business people receive the production inputs they need and get their products to markets, resulting in economic growth, he said.

Good roads can also reduce infant mortality, because pregnant women can get to hospital or health centers more quickly, Natsios said.

Earlier in 2004 USAID completed repaving a 275-kilometer stretch of Afghanistan's major road. With that accomplished, the agency can now focus on road projects in the more remote parts of the country, he said.

Natsios said the agency is also putting more emphasis on helping countries learn good governance skills. Just becoming a democracy is not enough to spur economic growth if the democracy does not also adopt good governance policies, he said.

SID is a global forum of individuals and institutions concerned with sustainable economic, social and political development.

COMPLIANCE, VERIFICATION, ENFORCEMENT KEYS TO ARMS CONTROL SUCCESS

State Department official DeSutter addresses chemical weapons conference

In order for arms control agreements to support the security of all nations, "all nations must actively work to promote compliance by all member states," says a State Department official.

Paula DeSutter, assistant secretary of state for verification and compliance, told the Conference of the States

Parties of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) November 30 at The Hague that verification, compliance assessment and compliance enforcement are the key elements to consider for any state party to an arms agreement. She then proceeded to discuss three topics:

- How do we reach noncompliance judgments?
- When is verification effective? and
- After detection, what?

Noncompliance to a convention's rules is a judgment the United States reaches only after several steps have been completed, DeSutter said. First comes any information that might indicate an activity is a compliance concern, including a government's own declaration to the convention. Information that can be verified through multiple sources is best, she added. All available evidence is weighed, she said, and the U.S. president must make the final judgment.

Effective verification, DeSutter said, requires on-site inspections, the ability to have challenge inspections, and the ability to draw on national and international sources of information. "National means and methods of verification are thus necessarily a critical part of a comprehensive approach to verification," she said.

After detection, she said, violators must face consequences for their violations, or they will not take compliance seriously; nor will would-be violators be deterred.

DATA PRESENTED ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

Number of U.S. death sentences hit 30-year low in 2003, U.S. agencies report

The following fact sheet on capital punishment in the United States was compiled from U.S. Department of Justice statistics and Department of State sources:

U.S. Department of State
International Information Programs
December 1, 2004

Capital Punishment in the United States

Context

Americans tend to cast the debate over capital punishment in terms of its deterrent value or appropriateness as a sanction for certain serious crimes. Overseas, the use of the death penalty in the United States is frequently raised as a human rights issue -- especially when juveniles, the mentally retarded, or the mentally ill are involved.

The latest statistics from the U.S. Department of Justice show a downward trend in death sentences nationwide. In 2003, the latest year for which statistics are available, the number of death sentences imposed hit a 30-year low.

The number of prisoners under sentence of death at year-end 2003 also decreased for the third year in a row.

In 2003, 65 inmates were executed, six fewer than in 2002.

Of those under sentence of death in 2003:

- 1,878 were white
- 1,418 were black
- 29 were American Indian
- 35 were Asian
- 14 were of unspecified race
- 47 were female

Although capital punishment is permitted by the federal government and the U.S. military, international criticism of the death penalty is largely focused on its use by state governments. Consequently, capital punishment in the United States must be understood within the context of American federalism, whereby matters for which the Constitution does not vest responsibility in the federal government are reserved to the states. As a result, states have broad powers to regulate their own general welfare, including enactment and enforcement of criminal laws, public safety and correction. As of 2003, the death penalty was authorized in 38 states, but only 11 of those states executed anyone, two fewer than in 2002.

Even though popular support for the death penalty is currently substantial, its use remains controversial, with support varying by region. Twelve states do not authorize the use of capital punishment, either because of a statutory or a judicial prohibition. Other states have announced moratoria on its use or are considering legislation to abolish it. Jurisdictions without the death penalty are

Alaska, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and the District of Columbia.

The Death Penalty and International Law

-- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights specifically recognizes the right of countries to impose the death penalty for the most serious crimes, carried out pursuant to a final judgment rendered by a competent court and in accordance with appropriate safeguards and observance of due process.

-- The United States works assiduously in international fora, including the U.N. Commission on Human Rights and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), against the use of the death penalty without due process, such as for political prisoners detained without fair trial by autocratic governments.

The Death Penalty in U.S. Law

-- The U.S. Supreme Court has upheld use of the death penalty for the most serious crimes provided that its use is in accordance with procedural guarantees of the U.S. Constitution and relevant state constitutions.

-- The U.S. judicial system provides an exhaustive system of protections to ensure that the death penalty is not applied in an extra-judicial, summary, or arbitrary manner. All death sentences are automatically reviewed by higher courts in 37 of the 38 states with capital punishment, and all convictions are automatically reviewed in 33 of the 38 states with capital punishment.

The Death Penalty for Crimes Committed by Juveniles

-- U.S. laws on the execution of juveniles are consistent with U.S. international obligations. When the U.S. ratified the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), it expressly reserved the right to continue to impose the death penalty for crimes committed by those under the age of 18. As of year-end 2003, two percent of those under sentence of death were age 17 or younger at the time of their arrest.

-- U.S. juvenile courts, designed solely for those under 18, do not sentence juveniles to death. In some cases, however, juveniles may be tried as adults in a court for adults subject to the same penalties as adults. In such cases, a hearing is held, with the accused juvenile represented by legal counsel, prior to a judge ordering that

a trial be moved from the juvenile court system to the regular criminal court system.

-- 30 states, the District of Columbia, and the federal government now bar consideration of the death penalty for anyone under 18.

-- Between 1973 and 2000, 17 men were executed in the United States for crimes committed prior to their 18th birthdays. But because of the lengthy appeal process, all 17 were in their twenties or thirties by the time of their execution.

-- The U.S. Supreme Court currently has pending a decision on whether or not juveniles should be eligible for the death penalty.

Capital Punishment and the Mentally Retarded

-- Execution of the mentally retarded is banned as a result of a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in June 2002 that execution of mentally retarded criminals constitutes "cruel and unusual" punishment prohibited by the 8th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Individuals are considered mentally retarded if they meet the clinical definition of having not only sub-average intellectual functioning, but also significant limitations in adaptive skills, such as communication, self-care, and self-direction, that became manifest before age 18. Controversy continues, however, over how state prison systems are ensuring accurate diagnosis of those on death row.

Capital Punishment and the Mentally Ill

-- In 1986 the U.S. Supreme Court prohibited the execution of the mentally insane and required an adversarial process for determining mental competency. Legal definitions and concepts of insanity and competency, however, do not always coincide with medical opinion, and as a result controversy continues.

FOREIGN STUDENTS IN THE U.S. STRENGTHEN AMERICAN SOCIETY

Ambassador LeBaron tells students not to fear visa requirements

Foreign students studying in the United States not only gain valuable insight into American society but also help educate the American people about their own cultures, according to U.S. Ambassador to Kuwait Richard LeBaron.

"I am convinced that one of the most important factors in relations between nations is that people across the globe understand how other societies work," LeBaron told a group of Kuwaiti students who recently completed their studies in the United States.

He said that the students' experiences in the United States gave them "a much greater ability to make informed judgments about what motivates Americans and how the United States works." He added that their judgments would not be limited to media images and the opinions of others.

At the same time, he said, the students had acted as ambassadors of their country, Arab culture and Islam. "As such, you not only educated yourselves, but also the American people," he said.

LeBaron noted that the number of Kuwaiti students studying in the United States has declined since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and he identified two likely causes: a perceived difficulty in obtaining visas and a fear that Muslims are not welcome in the United States.

The ambassador said that the United States has implemented new measures to protect itself from further terrorist attacks but added that the basic eligibility criteria for student visas have not changed.

He said the process of obtaining a student visa has, in fact, become more efficient. "On average, clearances, when required, are taking two weeks. Most applicants receive their visas within 48 hours of applying."

LeBaron said prospective students should be certain that they have all of the correct visa application materials and that they have a convincing case for pursuing their studies in the United States. "Consular officers have enormous responsibility for the protection of our nation

and they must be convinced of a legitimate purpose of travel," he said.

He also affirmed that the United States welcomes Arab and Muslim students and pointed out that many American colleges and universities have Muslim student associations that provide support to foreign students.

He said that students interested in studying in the United States can find information at U.S. embassy Web sites and through AMIDEAST, a private, nonprofit organization that strengthens mutual understanding and cooperation between peoples of the United States and of the Middle East and North Africa. AMIDEAST's Web site is available at:

<http://www.amideast.org/>

Comprehensive information on studying in the United States, is also available at the State Department's "Education USA" Web site at:

<http://educationusa.state.gov/>

The ambassador said that the United States is interested in increasing the number of foreign students studying in the United States out of a belief that "both of our societies are strengthened when we share our perspectives, our cultures and our aspirations."

Pleases Note: Most texts and transcript mentioned in the U.S. Mission Daily Bulletin are available via our homepage: **www.usmission.ch**

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